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## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Geschichte des Seidengewerbes in Köln vom 13. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert.* Von HANS KOCH. (Staats- und sozialwissenschaftliche Forschungen. Herausgegeben von G. SCHMOLLER UND M. SERING. Heft 128.) Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1907. 8vo, pp. xv + 124.

The sketch which Mr. Koch gives of the rise of the silk industry in Cologne, its prosperity, vicissitudes, and decline, affords valuable material to students of the evolution of business organization. For this industry was one of the earliest to be reorganized on capitalistic lines, and the bitter struggle waged in Cologne between gild and business enterprise gives a capital opportunity to follow the process by which the latter form of organization proved its decisive superiority under the conditions of money economy and machine technique.

Embroidery was the first branch of the industry to be practiced in Cologne. By the end of the twelfth century it had become a regular trade. The arts of spinning, weaving, and dyeing silk were introduced somewhat later, probably by immigrants from Zürich or Paris. By the middle of the fourteenth century all four branches were flourishing. Meanwhile the commerce in silk had made similar progress. The raw material was imported chiefly from Venice, and the export of silk fabrics extended to many towns in northern Europe. In the fifteenth century, Cologne became the "silk city" of Germany.

The embroiderers were organized as a guild in 1397, and the dyers were included in the guild of linen-dyers. But spinning and weaving were long conducted on the domestic system. The managers of these domestic enterprises had to possess both capital and business ability, even in these early days; for raw silk and looms were expensive, the market was wide, the time of the turnover long, and the risk considerable. At first silk merchants probably played this rôle; but later industrial operation and business management were combined. The business men were wealthy dyers, or prosperous weavers—often women—or merchants who

had married mistress weavers. The manual work of spinning and weaving was at first in the hands of women, in part inmates of the convents of Beguines. But during the fifteenth century, men gradually supplanted women, and in the next century they dominated the silk industry.

An important change occurred in 1437, when the "silk-makers," including both spinners and weavers, were incorporated as a guild at their own solicitation. Nineteen years later the spinners split off and formed a guild of their own; but they continued to be wage-earners dependent on the weavers. Until 1506 the silk-makers' guild included only women, and men who had "married into the craft." The officers were two men and two women annually chosen by the mistress weavers to see that the numerous regulations were duly observed. The mistress weavers worked in their own homes. They were limited to one apprentice each not counting their own children; but they might employ any number of journey-women. Some of these mistress weavers grew rich and undertook commercial operations in addition to their industrial work. The girl apprentice entered the household of her mistress, and served a term of three, later four, years. At the expiration of this term, she was legally free to set up for herself, on paying a fee of two or three gulden. Toward the close of the fifteenth century, however, it became difficult for an apprentice to establish herself as a new mistress, and a class of wage-working journey-women gradually formed. Its members were paid by the piece, on a scale fixed in the guild regulations. The rates were rather high, apparently because silk-working required unusual skill. But the wages problem proved difficult. The spinners, in particular, complained that the mistress weavers evaded the regulations against the importation of spun silk and against the truck system, and that they hired the cheap convent labor of the Beguines overmuch. The town authorities listened to the wage-earners, and opposed these practices with vigor, and apparently with success.

The formation of the guild of silk-makers seems not to have made much difference in the business organization of the industry. No attempt was made to compel all silk-workers to join the guild, though all were subject to the supervision of its officers in technical matters. Indeed, the male weavers could not become members, except by marriage, until 1506; and these "free" masters were the strongest persons in the craft. Thus the guild system in industrial

organization, and the domestic system in business organization, long existed side by side.

During the fifteenth century, the silk industry of Cologne developed steadily, and about 1500 it reached its highest point. Cologne silks were sold from Dantzig to London, and the annual import of raw silk rose above 20,000 pounds. This high tide of prosperity lasted through the first half of the sixteenth century; but in the second half a decline began. In 1564 a Venetian immigrant introduced a new machine, apparently for throwing silk, and a new process which required that throwing and dyeing be done in the same establishment. He was well received at first; but the native guildsmen soon began to make him trouble. The Venetian was soon followed by other foreigners who used the new methods, and despite the bitter hostility of the guild they obtained from the town council a confirmation of the right to use machines. The old masters adapted themselves to the new methods slowly and ineffectually, with the result that by 1600 the newcomers had won most of the trade. Meanwhile other towns in Germany and the Netherlands had become formidable competitors of Cologne as silk exporters, because they had adopted the improved methods more promptly.

Similar opposition to technical improvements was primarily responsible for the further decline in the seventeenth century. The silk weavers of Cologne had gone over mainly to the making of ribbons. Consequently, the introduction of a loom on which sixteen ribbons could be woven at one time by an unskilled operative was a matter of grave concern. The town council this time joined the guild in opposition. It prohibited the use of the ribbon loom; but seemingly with little success, for the first ordinance of 1675 had to be re-enacted several times, the last time in 1756. Elsewhere in Germany, in the Netherlands, and in England the ribbon loom was similarly forbidden. But the authorities of Basel had the foresight to permit its use in 1670—a step which helped that town to win first place in the manufacture of silk ribbons.

Cologne meanwhile fell farther and farther behind. It had been hard pressed by the Dutch and Swiss towns; presently a still more dangerous rival appeared in the neighboring town of Cre-feld. The silk industry of the latter town was not started until 1670; but it was favored by absence of hampering restrictions, by organization on a large scale, and by able business leadership.

Gradually Crefeld rose to a commanding position in the silk industry of Germany, not unlike that which Cologne had held in the years from 1450-1550. But the gloomier their prospects, the more tenaciously did the guild of Cologne cling to their antiquated methods. Their trade dwindled away in the course of the eighteenth century, and finally disappeared in the nineteenth.

Mr. Koch bases his account, largely upon the unpublished archives of Cologne, and prints some of the most important documents in an appendix. Occasional obscurities and repetitions suggest that his is an apprentice hand; but he deserves congratulations upon the success of his investigations.

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*Soziale und individualistische Auffassung im 18th Jahrhundert,  
vornehmlich bei Adam Smith und Adam Ferguson.* Ein  
Beitrag zur Geschichte der Soziologie. Von HERMANN  
HUTH. Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1907. Pp. vi+  
160. M. 4.40.

If sociology were obliged to assume responsibility for everything done in its name, it would be painful for a sociologist to confess, in an economic journal, the full truth about this monograph. Although not expressly stated, it is implied in the preface that the essay is a Doctor's dissertation. It was worked out under the direction of Professor Kurt Breysig in Berlin, and it is published in the *Staats- und sozialwissenschaftliche Forschungen* of Professors Schmoller and Sering. Under the circumstances my concern with the author is of less moment than the interrogation marks which the book leaves in my mind about the sponsors. Can it be that at the end of the long grind for the Doctor's degree, German university authorities occasionally remit their critical vigilance, and permit the candidate the relief of an intellectual orgy? I would not imply that there is no evidence of serious scholarship in the book. On the contrary its technique, so far as the collection and arrangement of evidence goes, shows the result of rigid training. On the side of interpretation, however, it shows no more conception of perspective than a Chinese picture. In a word, the "psychological fallacy" is turned loose upon the material and allowed to do its worst. The consequence is one more title added to the list of preposterous renderings of Adam Smith.